

Monday, October 25, 1948

Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia

28 More Days
to Thanksgiving

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IS GEORGE WASHINGTON HALL HAUNTED?

Charles Jasper Gives "Black Magic" As Cause Of Mysterious Murder

"Black magic" summarizes the explanation Sir Charles Jasper, noted occult authority, gave concerning the chain of baffling events following the murder of the unidentified man in George Washington Hall. After a two-hour conference with the chief-of-police, Sir Charles said that he was sure this was the event he had been looking for since his study of the works of Robert Battersby, notorious druggist and practitioner of black magic.

Robert Battersby, who was found dead on this same spot nine years ago, swore that, if he were murdered, within ten days of his death, his ghost would walk. The sign of his coming would be the appearance of a dumb woman on the scene. She was to speak prior to the ghost's appearance and then be mysteriously killed. Following his murder, these prophecies were carried out to the letter.

The strange part of it is that he swore that if anyone else were found murdered on the site of his own murder the same circumstances would follow. The unidentified man was found in George Washington Hall in the same dressing room in which Robert Battersby was murdered; October 29 will be the tenth night.

Authorities have kept the hall under observation night and day, looking for any further sign. The report of Margaret Thompson, senior, concerning her investigation of G. W. is being investigated and is reported further in this paper.

Campus Chest Drive Includes Two Of The Ten Commandments

Students passing by Chandler Circle can't help noticing that the Campus Chest pledge drive is going very slowly. A quota of \$3000 means that each student would have to pledge only \$2.00, a small offering certainly if the monthly causes the money goes for is taken into consideration. Between now and the end of the drive every student ought to be able to save \$2.00 if only in pennies.

Cancer and tuberculosis are two of the greatest killers in the world today. It is hard to realize this while enjoying perfect health unless every student would stop to realize that the parents, who work so hard to give their children the education and opportunities they desire and are taking advantage of now, may at anytime be hit by these death-dealing germs. Perhaps if this were impressed upon every mind the pledge rate would boom.

Looking at it from another, less personal, angle, love of fellow man is another outstanding part of the American code, as well as the religious. Wanting a Chinese or German or French student to share the same blessings so liberally bestowed on the American, and aiding in the fight to procure these blessings is a job that should be enthusiastically tackled by everyone.

Janitor Affirms That Recent Happenings Seem Unnatural

Wallace Ponsell, janitor of George Washington Hall, stated in an interview following the murder, that in all the 29 years he had been caretaker of this building that he had never seen such "mysterious goings-on" as he had witnessed in the past week. Whether these happenings are connected in anyway with the recent investigation, has not been affirmed, but in reviewing the incidents as stated by this trustworthy janitor, it would seem to the case.

Wallace, as he is generally known around the campus, stated that on Thursday night, October 21st, he locked up the whole building at 6:00 P. M., as is his usual custom. "I double-checked the doors into the theater," he said, "because I knew that the boss would want me to do so on account of this trouble. I'm sure no one could have gotten in." The next morning when he came to open the doors he found to his surprise that the door on left of the stage had been opened and left ajar. That was only the first of similar occurrences.

Around 11:30 Friday night several girls in Westmoreland Hall discovered that there was a light in the third floor of G. W., approximately near the radio studio. Mr. Jack Warfield and Mrs. Mil-

Students Offer Clues To Murder

New clues to the George Washington Hall murder case were presented today when several well-known students on campus volunteered information concerning incidents witnessed the night of the crime. Misses Corrine Conley, Norah Pitts, Patricia Head, Jo Cleary and Jean Cyphers were the students who gave their assistance.

Misses Conley and Pitts, roommates living in Custis Hall, stated that on their way from the library to their rooms, on the night of October 18, they decided to walk around campus awhile before continuing their studies. Passing by G. W., they both affirmed that they heard a sharp sound like a box being dropped, and had commented on it. Supposing that some of the stage crew were making plans for the forthcoming production, they paid no special attention and returned to their dormitory at stage about 1:00 A. M.

At the same time in the front of G. W. Misses Cleary and Cyphers, on their way to their residence in Framar heard a door open and noticed a man in a dark suit disappear into the building. They said they saw nothing unusual in this occurrence at the time, thinking that the president of the college or one of the administrators had private keys.

The time does not correlate exactly, as none of the girls are exactly sure when they passed the buildings. Authorities believe that the man seen was possibly the assassin, although no explanation can be made as to how he procured a key, and the sound heard, at approximately the same time, was the shot. There is no actual confirmation for all this which leads most people to believe that the murder was caused by supernatural forces.

Miss Patricia Head, junior, said as she left her dorm about 10:00 that Monday night, "I saw a man run around the side of G. W. and dash out the gates, turning to the left on College Ave. I came right in because it sort of scared me. I couldn't figure out what anyone would be doing over there at that time of night, although it didn't really impress me enough to report it. I forgot about it until I heard about the murder."

Investigating later, the police discovered that the man was a student at Mary Washington who had been dating a girl in Mary Hall and was running to catch a ride downtown. Thus far any tangible clues have evaporated in such a way. Sir Arthur Jasper contends that his surmise was correct and that his surmise was correct and that this is only following the prophecy of Mr. Robert Battersby.

Reporter Finds Evidence Of Form In G. W. Theatre

A recent scare by Margaret H. Thompson, senior, has caused police to double their vigilance around George Washington Hall. Miss Thompson, reporting for the college weekly, *The Bullet*, entered into the G. W. theater before 5:00 last Friday night, hid until the building was locked from the outside, and waited for further developments.

Around 12:00 Miss Thompson reported that she noticed what she supposed to be the figure of

Mysterious Death Causes Police To Investigate "George Washington Theatre Legend"

Watchman Finds "Ghost"

A late report has come in from Clifford Reeves, Mary Washington College policeman, stating that he is sure there was someone in George Washington Hall last Saturday night, but whether it was man, beast or "spook" he couldn't tell. He had been patrolling the area near there for several hours when he noticed a light on the stage about 1:00 A. M.

When "Pat", as he is known to all the students, investigated there was no light but the switchboard was burning as though the power controlling the footlights had been in use. He left them as they were and inconspicuously took a seat nearby, hoping the intruder would return to shut them off. After about an hour he heard what sounded like a door slamming in the dressing rooms. Leaving his post, he systematically searched every room only to find that all the doors and windows were closed tightly and the dressing rooms were empty.

Ascending the steps, he entered the stage once again, discovered the switchboard had been entirely shut off and that a filmy, gossamer-like shawl had been dropped in the middle of the stage. It was the type not commonly worn except for evening wear and seemed to be comparatively new. He left the shawl where it was and returned to his seat.

Perhaps two hours had passed when he heard a swishing sound high above him on the "grid," the steel bars which hold backdrops, curtains, and the movie screen. A shadowy form seemed to be swaying unsteadily on one of these beams. Fearing that it was a real person about to fall he played his flashlight on the exact spot—only to find it unoccupied, as was the surrounding area. He climbed up to the grid himself and searched all the little nooks where anyone might hide. Descending to the stage level once again he discovered that the shawl was gone. Although "Pat" waited until the building was opened, and again searched, he heard no more disturbance, nor did he see anything unusual.

A woman descending into the dressing rooms. As she followed the shadowy form she turned on the light and discovered to her amazement that the corridor ahead of her was empty. Certain that the person had stepped into a nearby dressing-room, she investigated each in turn only to find them all empty.

Becoming a little frightened, the reporter turned to ascend the stairs to the stage, snapping off the light as she went. Feeling sure that someone was following her, Miss Thompson whirled around to find the figure stealthily pursuing. Remembering the recent crime in the theater, she became thoroughly scared and ran out of the building to her dormitory.

When questioned by reporters, Miss Thompson asserted that she

Janitor Discovers Man Shot in Dressing Room

The dead body of an unidentified man, believed to be an Italian, was found by the janitor in a dressing room of George Washington Hall at Mary Washington College, early on the morning of October 19. The city coroner stated that the man had been shot through the heart late the night before.

The police have, so far, uncovered no clues as to the murderer's identity or motives, but following the announcement of the mysterious circumstances surrounding the man's death, Sir Charles Jasper, noted authority on the Occult in America and author of *The George Washington Theater Legend* wired that perhaps he could be of some aid. Authorities are awaiting the arrival of Sir Arthur before offering any further information on the subject.

The dead man is described as being of medium height with dark hair and swarthy complexion, of slight but wiry build. A man of his type—the coroner stated—should be able to defend himself in any ordinary encounter. The fact that there was no sign of a struggle led investigators to believe that the assassin was a companion of, or at least an acquaintance of the murdered man.

Equally baffling to the police is the identity of the deceased and his reasons for being at G. W. Hall. Neither the janitor nor faculty members recognized the man although none was sure that he wasn't one of the workmen around the campus.

University of Virginia Discusses Political Questions

For the past several weeks, numerous speakers have been at the University to present their cases for their particular candidate. Last week, the school was honored to have J. Strom Thurmond, Governor of South Carolina and State's Rights candidate for president, speak in front of a group of State's Righters and others. Last week also, Robert Whitehead, Delegate in the Virginia Assembly and a distinguished alumnus of the University of Virginia, spoke on behalf of the Truman-Barkley ticket. Next week, Hugh D. Scott, chairman of the Republican National Committee and another distinguished alumnus of the University of Virginia, will speak on the Dewey-Warren ticket.

was not a person given to hallucinations or day-dreams and was positive that the figure she had seen was a real person.

Investigators have been stationed throughout the building but none have reported seeing anything suspicious or unusual, so far.

Miss Thompson, in reply to queries concerning her investigation, stated that she had been assigned to cover the story by the editor of the paper and that she thought she might as well get a "first-hand account." "I did," she continued, "and from now on I'll leave the 'on-the-spot' reporting to someone armed with a crowbar and lots of nerve."